

Remarks/Arguments

Claims 1-29 are pending for examination, with claims 30-48 standing as withdrawn claims. No claims have been cancelled or amended in this response, which accompanies a Request for Continued Examination.

The Examiner has again rejected all of the claims pending for examination as of the most recent office action as either anticipated by Chen under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a), or obvious in view of Chen in combination with Northrup under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). The Applicants do not necessarily agree that all of the limitations of any one of Applicants' claims can be found in Chen and/or Northrup, as would be required for these rejections to stand. However, the Applicants submit that the enclosed Declaration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 renders these rejections moot, since the declaration shows that Chen does not qualify as prior art to the present application.

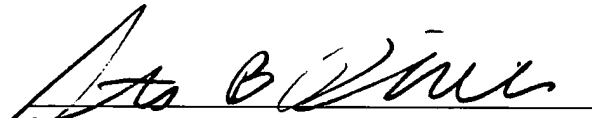
In particular, the enclosed declaration with accompanying exhibits shows conception prior to the effective date of Chen, and due diligence in constructively reducing the invention to practice by filing the priority patent application. Note that the relevant period for due diligence, from just prior to the date of the Chen reference to the November 17, 1999 filing date of the application is only six weeks during which time, as shown by the declaration, the inventors and their attorney were working on the patent application.

Applicants believe they have responded to all of the concerns raised by the Examiner. Reconsideration of this application as amended is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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